

Women's foreign Missionary Society.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.
(WESTERN DIVISION.)

The Universal Sisterhood.

LUCY WATERBURY.

I AM writing to you concerning your sister who is in great need. I met her in India a few years ago. She was only a child in years, but very old in suffering. At the age of twelve she was married and before she was thirteen became a mother. Lying on the floor of a mud hut, which was her home, she met excruciating pain, aggravated by every form of torture that ignorant women could devise. After cruel treatment too sickening for words, a slow fire blistered her body for purification, and she lay for three days in a stupor with neither food nor drink, according to the Hindu custom. The baby was a girl and died; so many girl babies die in India that in some districts the proportion is eighty-one boys to nineteen girls. The number of girls is still further reduced later by frequent suicides,—poor little sisters! If you were there how you would stretch out your hands to save them as they turn their beautiful, despairing faces toward the deep well or stagnant pool.

But the saddest hour is not the hour of birth nor of death. More bitter still is the life of twenty-one millions of widows. Your sister is a widow, only thirteen, but a despised outcast,

denied even the right of chastity, she wanders about an object of loathing. Ah, little sister, we could lighten your burden. We could give you the comfort of Christ if only we were *interested*.

Stand in the street of a heathen city and watch the swarms of children, naked, dirty, diseased. See the patient faces of those little girls, seven, possibly eight years old. In a week some will be married and a week later will lie in the hospital breathing out their little lives in an agony of pain—*murdered!* God help them and forgive those who will not help.

Is this the land,—where children are taught every form of vice from the cradle; where from idols, foul and obscene comes the only thought of God; where girls are sacrificed; where womanhood is dragged in the mire; where widow is the synonym for prostitute; is this the land where the "beautiful religion" of Hinduism flourishes? Where are the men who in priestly robes from public platforms in Christian lands proclaim the beauty of this beastly thing called religion? When these *priests* have released from vile heathen temples thousands of fair young girls whose lives are devoted to the horrible rites of heathenism, let them dare to speak before Christian women of this religion, whose very name if understood would cause a shudder.

Turn from your Hindu sister to that sister in China. She cannot come to you. Her feet are bound and her life is bound and fettered. From thousands of homes in that land rises a wail of pain. Shall we drown the sobs and moans with hymns. "Jesus, Lover of my Soul." "He Leadeth Me," are comforting and may shut out the sound, but God hears the cry from Chinese women above the hymns which we selfishly sing, and there is not praise but discord. Send

help soon if you would not be too late, for "a million a month in China are dying without God."

No one has penetrated *darkest* Africa who has not entered an African woman's life. Born a slave, her life at the mercy of her husband, a believer in witchcraft, filthy, debased, naked,—meet your sister again. We cannot. We close our eyes and turn away from all these dreadful, pitiful faces, only to meet another face which we cannot shut out. His words ring in our ears, haunt our hearts: "Inasmuch as ye did it *not* unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto Me."

Ah, but you say, "I gave my dollar." So you did but how many dollars did you spend straightway in some pretty trifle or pleasure trip?

Some of you refused even the dollar for your sister in foreign lands, because you believe in Home Missions, and of course you can't have Foreign Missions unless you keep up the work here; which system of financiering may seem very complete, but is so unsatisfactory to the one billion four hundred millions of men and women beyond the touch of homework. Or you peep into the slums of New York and Boston and forthwith say, "See, isn't there enough to be done at home?" Use that same logical brain to reason that if a lack of Christianity produces slums in America, the condition of whole nations, absolutely unreached, must be infinitely worse, especially as they have not within their own borders twelve millions of Christians to render personal service.

Perhaps you said, with no excuse at all, "I don't believe," or, "I am not interested in Missions." You said it not in a whisper, but to influence your daughter or your neighbor. How many things have you done to-day for love's sake, for duty's sake, in your kitchen, your sewing-room, your office,

not because you feel any white heat of enthusiasm, but simply because it was your work,—hard work, discouraging, slow, but your work? Are you not bound by the command of Christ to do this work, in which He certainly is interested?

You may say my statements are exaggerated. You can easily prove that they are all too true.

You may say, "No one has a right to dictate how I shall use my money." *Whose* money? Not yours, if you are Christ's.

You may say, "I am too sensitive to listen to such horrors." And yet,—strange sensitiveness,—you will, by withholding help, force your sister to endure these horrors.

You may say, "I cannot help it; if they don't know they are not responsible." Try that plan with your own children. What of present suffering? What does God say? "When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speaketh to warn him from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at your hand."

You may say a hundred other things to excuse yourself from obeying a direct command of Christ, or you may say, and I trust that you will, my dear sister, for are we not His big family, and do we not believe in the Universal Fatherhood?—you may say,—"I have not done what I should have done for my unhappy sister. I have given little or grudgingly, or not at all. Forgive me, my Father, for the past, and the future shall be different. As a beginning, I take this box or envelope, and will put into it each day as I pray for my sister, or each Lord's Day as I go to His house, an offering, which shall make known His love to the uttermost parts of the earth."